

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 FUKUOK 00087 120222Z

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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SAM-01 /058 W

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R 100300Z JUL 75

FM AMCONSUL FUKUOKA

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC 471

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO JA

STATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJ: YAMAGUCHI CITY MAYORALITY ELECTION

SUMMARY: CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR OF YAMAGUCHI CITY WON RATHER HANDILY, IN SPITE OF PREDICTIONS BY LOCAL POLITICALLY AWARE JAPANESE THAT RACE WAS TOO CLOSE TO CALL. ALTHOUGH ELECTION ITSELF OF RELATIVELY MINOR IMPORTANCE, IT SEEMS SIGNIFICANT BECAUSE OF FAILURE OF REFORMIST CANDIDATE, SUPPORTED BY ALL FOUR OPPOSITION PARTIES, AND EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON NEXT LOWER HOUSE ELECTION, WHERE OPPOSITION PARTIES SEEM SURE TO GAIN SEAT. END SUMMARY.

VOTING FOR SEAT OF RETIRING CONSERVATIVE MAYOR OF YAMAGUCHI CITY HELD JULY 6. VOTING RATE WAS FAIRLY HIGH (74.65 PERCENT) UNDER

PAGE TWO RUADLTA7864 C O N F I D E N T I A L

FAIR SKIES. TWO SERIOUS CANDIDATES (THIRD CANDIDATE RECEIVED 121 VOTES) WERE CONSERVATIVES YASUO HORI AND LEFTIST TERUHIKO SUEMUNE, WHO WAS SUPPORTED BY JSP, JCP, KOMEITO AND DSP. ALTHOUGH PROMINENT LOCAL BUSINESSMAN AND ASSISTANT SECTION CHIEF OF PREFECTURAL GOVERNMENT TOLD REPORTING OFFICER ELECTION EVE THAT RACE WAS TOO CLOSE TO PREDICT, CONSERVATIVE HORI WON WITH 31,056 VOTES TO SUEMUNE'S 22,351.

PERSONALITIES APPARENTLY NOT DECISIVE FACTOR IN RACE, SINCE EVEN CONSERVATIVES ADMITTED HORI NOT AS ATTRACTIVE PERSONALLY AS HIS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 FUKUOK 00087 120222Z

REFORMIST OPPONENT. REASONS FOR HORI'S VICTORY, WE BELIEVE,

ARE BASIC CONSERVATISM OF CITY RESIDENTS, STRONG SUPPORT BY UBE KOSAN AND GOVERNOR MASAYUKI HASHIMOTO. IN ADDITION, FAILURE OF LEFTIST OPPOSITION TO JELL WAS DECISIVE. WHILE NOMINALLY RECEIVING SUPPORT FROM ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES, VOTE INDICATES THAT THIS UNITED ACTION, LIKE OTHER RECENT ONES IN WESTERN JAPAN, ALMOST COMPLETE FAILURE.

SECOND IMPORTANT ASPECT OF RACE IS EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON NEXT LOWER HOUSE ELECTION. PREFECTURAL OFFICIAL, WHO SEEMS TO BE QUITE CLOSE TO GOVERNOR, TOLD US ELECTION EVE GOVERNOR WOULD NOT RUN FOR LOWER HOUSE IF CONSERVATIVE CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR LOST.

PAGE THREE RUADLTA7864 C O N F I D E N T I A L

NEXT DAY HE SAID HASHIMOTO'S CANDADACY SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN. GOVERNOR WILL RUN FOR ONE OF FIVE SEATS IN YAMAGUCHI' SECOND DISTRICT, SAME ONE FROM WHICH FORMER PRIME MINISTER SATO ELECTED. TWO FACTORS MAKE LOSS OF ONE OF THREE CONSERVATIVE SEATS ALMOST INEVITABLE. FIRST, HASHIMOTO VERY POPULAR IN SECOND DISTRICT (WHICH CENTERS IN EASTERN HALF OF PREFECTURE AND INCLUDES, BESIDES CAPITAL CITY, IWAKUNI AND IDUSTRIAL CENTERS OF UBE AND TOKUYAMA) AND WILL FINISH NO LOWER THAN THIRD IN LIST OF WINNERS. IN ADDITION, FORMER PRIME MINISTER KISHI WILL WIN IF HE RUNS. HOWEVER, THIRD CONSERVATIVE, TARO OZAWA, FINISHED FIFTH IN LAST ELECTION, AND IS REPORTEDLY VERY WORRIED (AND RIGHTLY SO) ABOUT HIS CHANCES IN THE NEXT ELECTION. IN SUM, IT SEEMS ALMOST CERTAIN CONSEVATIVES WILL DROP ONE OF THEIR SEATS IN THE DISTRICT, PROBABLY TO KOMEITO, WHICH MADE IMPRESSIVE GAINS IN APRIL'S CONSOLIDATED ELECTIONS.

RICHARDSON

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## Message Attributes

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